



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 110 – May 30, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Each year, the Governor's Conference on Tourism offers hospitality professionals a chance to network with members of the industry, tourism partners from across the state, and representatives from our top international markets. I look forward to seeing you this year in Tucson as we learn ways to prepare for another great year of marketing the Grand Canyon State and hear about our past success. One of the most popular features of the conference is the silent auction, which gives everyone the chance to bid on great items, including travel packages, sports memorabilia and pages of advertising in leading magazines and newspapers. The proceeds from the silent auction benefit the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association, the Arizona Tourism Alliance and the Arizona Restaurant and Hospitality Association. I encourage you to pass this information along to your tourism contacts in other states to help us collect even more exciting trips or packages for our silent auction. If you have any questions, or if you have any items to donate, please contact Debbie Johnson with the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association at 602-604-0729 or djohnson@azhla.com.

Tomorrow is also the deadline for the 2006 Governor's Tourism Awards. These awards are the highlight of every Governor's Conference, and I look forward each year to learning more about the programs and people who help make Arizona a success. With only one more day to wrap up your nomination submissions, I encourage you to visit www.azot.com for more information.

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Submit Your Nominations for the Governor's Tourism Awards

If you plan on submitting a nomination for the Governor's Tourism Awards, the deadline is tomorrow, May 31, 2006 at 5pm. Don't miss the opportunity to be recognized for your achievements in front of your peers as the awards are presented at the 26th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson on July 11, 2006. Nomination forms and guidelines are available online at www.azot.com and can be submitted electronically via e-mail to mthompson@azot.gov or by mail to Arizona Office of Tourism, 1110 W. Washington, Suite 155, Phoenix, Arizona 85007. For more information, contact Michelle Thompson at 602-364-3724 or mthompson@azot.gov.

Trippin' with AOT

GOGO Worldwide Appreciation Dinners and Trade Shows

Jennifer Sutcliffe and Kristy McKinnon from AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Division attended the GOGO Worldwide Vacations Travel Agent Appreciation Dinners and Trade Shows in Philadelphia and Baltimore on May 24th and 25th, 2006. GOGO Worldwide Vacations is one of the largest wholesale travel companies in North America. By attending the event, AOT had the opportunity to reach top selling travel agents and expose them to Arizona product. This event featured an evening trade show and dinner and showcased GOGO suppliers and destinations. Overall, AOT was able to talk to more than 100 agents about Arizona and distribute Arizona travel information to attendees. Please contact Kristy McKinnon at 602-364-3696 or kmckinnon@azot.gov for more information about this event.

Arizona Well-Represented in European Tour Operator Brochures

The Arizona Office of Tourism targets European travelers from the UK and Germany (including German-speaking Austria and Switzerland) and has in-market representatives in both countries. Every year, the international reps complete an inventory of all tour

operators in their market who offer product in Arizona. This year, the highlights included:

- Arizona is heavily featured in Germany, with 87 tour operators offering the destination. Nine of these operators also target the Austrian market. This is an increase from 84 in 2005 and of this total, 22 are on-line operators.
- Arizona product is offered by 90 UK tour operators, which is an increase from 79 the previous year. Of this total, 18 are exclusively on-line operators with no printed brochure.

The product inventories from Germany and the UK are currently available for \$75 each. For more information, please contact Hylton Fothergill at 602-364-3706 or hfothergill@azot.gov.

Industry News

Family Travel on the Rise this Summer, Survey Shows

Family travel is on the rise this summer, according to four out of five American Express Travel agents polled nationwide, who identified it as one of this year's most significantly increasing travel trends. This summer, family vacations are expanding beyond the traditional getaways to include newer, broader, more active and meaningful travel plans, say agents. They say the top motivators for family travel include the desire to introduce children to different cultures, customs and lifestyles, to experience new things together and create lasting memories. Among other findings, 81 percent of agents are booking family vacations consisting of multi-generational trips that include grandparents. More than two-thirds of agents are seeing grandparents traveling exclusively with their grandchildren--independent of Mom and Dad. (PR Newswire)

Baby Boomers Push RV Ownership to New Record

Baby Boomers have pushed the number of recreational vehicle owners to record levels, including some who hit the road full time while continuing to pursue their careers. Baby Boomers have money, a sense of wonderlust and enough technology to run an office or stay in touch with family while on the road, said Rachael Parsons, spokeswoman for the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association. Nearly 8 million households owned at least one RV in 2005, according to a study by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center. That's a 58 percent increase from 1980. About 384,400 RVs were sold in 2005, according to RVIA. The typical RV owner is 35 to 54 years old, owns a house, has an annual income of \$68,000 and travels an average of 4,500 miles a year, according to the study. (AP; www.SeattlePost-Intelligencer.com)

NAU School of Hotel & Restaurant Management Offers Hospitality Leadership Academy

Northern Arizona University's School of Hotel and Restaurant Management is now offering a Hospitality Leadership Academy. This specially-designed certificate program consists of six core workshops and three electives designed for managers, supervisors, trainees, and aspiring managers. The first workshop will take place on July 28th. The courses are designed for tourism leaders and hospitality employees, tribal chairs and council members, as well as education department, work force development, and economic/community development managers and directors. For more information about these programs coming directly to your organization or being customized to your specific needs, please contact Jenny Staskey at 928-523-1918 or via e-mail at Jenny.Staskey@nau.edu. (NAU e-mail, 5/22)

Memorial Day travelers Face Higher Costs

According to AAA's survey, about 37.6 million Americans plan to travel 50 miles or more during the Memorial Day weekend. That's a nearly 1 percent increase in travel from last year, but the smallest increase seen in recent years. Arizonans are paying about 77 cents more per gallon of gasoline than they did year ago. The average statewide price Monday was \$3.07 per gallon of self-serve unleaded regular. Drivers filling up their tanks in the Valley will encounter gas prices in the \$3.10-\$3.11 range per gallon, except in Scottsdale, where the average is \$3.15. Based on the latest prices, driving 500 miles at a rate of 20 miles per gallon will add nearly \$20 to the trip's cost this year. The most popular TripTik and map requests for AAA Arizona members include: Puerto Penasco, Mexico; Disneyland; San Diego; and Northern and Southeastern Arizona. For more: www.aaaaz.com. (Phoenix Business Journal, 5/23, www.bizjournals.com/phoenix)

Significant Travel Trend: Family Getaways Changing

Family travel is on the rise, making it among the year's most significant trends, says American Express. AmEx polled nationwide agents to find 79 percent of them saw more family travel. But the agents said families are not doing the traditional getaways but are doing newer, broader, more active and meaningful travel plans. Motivations for parents include the desire to introduce children to different cultures and customs. The poll found 81 percent of agents are booking family vacations that consist of multi-generational trips, often including grandparents. "Additionally, more than two-thirds of agents are seeing grandparents traveling exclusively with their grandchildren," said American Express. American Express travel agents say families are increasingly drawn to active and experience-driven travel plans. Another key trend: more family members pairing up to travel in mother-daughter type getaways, for example. (www.TravelMole.com)

2005 was Best Year Ever for Hotel Industry

The year 2005 marked the most profitable year ever in absolute dollars for the U.S. hotel industry, according to Smith Travel Research. Based on statistics compiled by STR, the industry generated some \$122.7 billion in revenues and \$22.6 billion in profits last year. This profit number is slightly above the \$22.5 billion that the industry generated in the

year 2000, the highest level achieved prior to 2005. "The U.S. hotel industry is firing on all cylinders," said Randy Smith, founder and CEO of STR. "Nationwide average daily rate and occupancy figures increased 5.4 percent and 2.9 percent, respectively, in 21005 and the accelerated growth in ADR helped hoteliers to increase their profits," Smith added. (Special to Travel Advance)

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